

---

# **Humanitarian Transportation Programs or How Little Programs Can Produce Big Peace Dividends**

**By**

**Judith McCallum**  
**Defense Security Cooperation Agency**

The Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) directs the funding and management of two programs that provide transportation of humanitarian supplies on behalf of private citizens, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and on occasion, other U.S. government agencies. These transportation activities, the funded transportation and the Denton space-available programs, are low-profile, inexpensive initiatives which nevertheless accomplish highly productive and popular peacetime objectives. These efforts help build regional stability within the sphere of the commanders-in-chief's (CINC's) purview of theater engagement and improve readiness, while they help fulfill the vision and energies of American charities and the Congress.

One could easily be forgiven for receiving the foregoing remarks with skepticism, if the proof of effectiveness of these activities were not so demonstrable. Under the auspices of these programs, the Department of Defense (DoD) moves about forty-five surface shipments and one-hundred and ten airlift missions annually, of sometimes critically needed humanitarian goods provided by American charitable organizations. The cost of the combined programs to the U.S. military? About \$1 million a year. In order to understand how this remarkable efficiency is achieved, we will review the authorities for the program, then follow the story of one particular mission.

## **The Funded Transportation Program**

The funded transportation program originated in 1985 and is conducted under the general authority for humanitarian assistance, Title 10 U.S.C., Section 2551, which authorizes the Department of Defense to conduct humanitarian assistance worldwide and transport humanitarian assistance goods within prescribed limits. Since then, the program has been expanded to allow transportation worldwide of cargo for non-government offices, international organizations, as well as for DoD non-lethal excess property. The authority includes the ability to pay actual transportation, as well as associated administrative costs.

The process begins when the State Department (DoS) receives an application from a non-governmental organization or international organization requesting transportation of humanitarian supplies. When it certifies that the proposed shipment coincides with the foreign policy interests of the U.S., it conducts an inspection of the materials, to ascertain that there is no objection from the U. S. embassy in the recipient country. It then forwards the request to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and DSCA takes over. Prospective users of funded transportation are informed of the minimum cargo needed to use the program (one 20 foot shipping container, or 1100 cubic feet) and of other requirements and coordinating information.

The statutory authority permits transportation via any mode and for any cargo that could be defined as humanitarian; OSD and the DoS have established a policy that imposes budgetary and policy restraints on the program. Transport is limited only to surface modes (usually a

---

combination of trucking and sealift, which is usually far less expensive than air); and the cargo is limited only to that which addresses basic humanitarian needs (e.g., medical, food, shelter, clothing, educational items). Airlift can be utilized, but is reserved for emergencies only.

### **The HUG Experience**

On March 6, 2000, Humans United in Giving (HUG) International, an non-governmental organization headquartered in Dallas, requested that a shipment of goods necessary for the survival of Romanian orphans be delivered to Braila, Romania. Humans United in Giving International provided the State Department and DSCA officials with cargo specifications, an inventory of goods, and plans for distribution by the recipient organization upon arrival in Romania. The U.S. officials determined that the diapers, baby formula, cribs and mattresses, linens, medical supplies, walkers, playpens, and clothes were indeed of a humanitarian nature and that the resultant good health and well-being of these infants would in its own way help stabilize the local, national, and regional situation.

Defense Security Cooperation Agency officials arranged for a contractor to pick up the goods in Dallas on April 4 where the donor was responsible for loading the containers with the donated items. Subsequently the containers were trucked to New Orleans where they were loaded into on a ship which set sail for Romania on April 15. The cargo worked its way through customs from May 23-24, was trucked to Baila the next day, and was unloaded into HUG warehouses. Humans United in Giving International then distributed these goods to four Romanian orphanages to coincide with their program of nurturing, grooming, clothing, feeding, and playtime activities.

Thus, in a time period (normally from six to eight weeks) when many organizations would find it difficult to move goods across a town, campus, base, or post, DSCA is routinely able to facilitate a global door-to-door delivery system. The process requires consistent interagency coordination, reliable collaboration with non-governmental organizations, dependable private contractor relationships, and solid recipient nation cooperation as well as often providing updates to concerned members of Congress.

### **The Denton Program**

The twin to the funded transportation program is the Denton program. It allows the DoD to provide transportation of privately donated humanitarian cargo to charitable organizations in foreign countries on DoD carries (primarily military air) on a space-available basis. The program is authorized under the Denton amendment (Title 10, U.S.C., Section 402), enacted by Congress in 1985. The Denton program historically has enjoyed strong support on Capitol Hill; many shipments have Congressional interest or sponsors.

For a Denton shipment to be approved, the State Department, the Agency for International Development (AID), and DSCA must certify that it is in the national interest, the material being transported is in usable condition, and there are legitimate requirements for the material and adequate arrangements for distribution.

There is a minimum load requirement of 2,000 and a maximum load of 100,000 pounds, the cargo is inspected, the donor must have a designated recipient for the cargo at the designation and a duty-free certificate from the recipient nation. In addition, users of this program are made aware

---

that transportation depends on the availability of a military flight between specific origin and destination points. There is no assurance of specific delivery date.

The Denton program has served many local charities, creating significant grass-roots support for this distinctly military humanitarian mission. Because the Denton program has relied heavily on reserve component training flights, there generally is no monetary cost; it actually provides realistic training opportunities, otherwise difficult to achieve.

### **The Payoff**

In 2000, the Department of Defense transported more than five million pounds of privately donated cargo worldwide, 2.5 million pounds via the Denton program and over three million pounds via the funded transportation program. The two transportation programs have been instrumental in allowing the DoD to be able to respond to calls from many quarters – charitable institutions, the Congress, and nations facing grave humanitarian threats – to provide humane support to countries and people at risk. But in the last analysis, the decision to embark on this course of action is to support the national security strategy of the U.S. There is little doubt that these programs are integral parts of the commanders in chiefs' theater engagement plans, that the goodwill produced by these programs creates a better atmosphere of bilateral understanding, or that the ensuing well being of the people makes for a more stable environment. There is also little doubt that the U.S. military personnel involved are able to hone their war fighting skills and feel good about being directly involved in improving the plight of refugees, orphans, the sick, and the devastated.

### **About the Author**

Judith McCallum is a Transportation Analyst and Program Manager for the Humanitarian Assistance Programs with responsibility for Disaster Relief Officer Funded Transportation Program, Denton (space available) Program, Humanitarian Daily Ration (HDR) Program and the U.S. Joint Forces Command. She has twenty years U.S. government service including six years experience in U.S. Humanitarian Assistance Programs. She has been involved with the Women's Executive Leadership Program and is a U.S. Army veteran.